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WHY TERRACE?

Circular 1054 Cooperative Extension Service
College of Agriculture
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
In cooperation with
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Soil Conservation Service

Fertile soil and life-giving water are lost farming up and down the hill.

Terrace . . .

- To save investments in topsoil and fertilizer.
- To grow row crops while controlling erosion.
- To prevent pollution of streams by silt and fertilizers.
- To improve farmability with smoother slopes and fewer gullies and waterways.

Modern Terraces . . .

- Are as parallel as fields permit.
- Are spaced for today's equipment.

Parallel terraces cross slope; tile outlets remove water without erosion.

Farmers Like Terraces

Leonard D. Carmichael, Ogle County, credits his terraces for saving fertilizer dollars and allowing him to grow continuous corn and soybeans with minimal soil loss. "Before we terraced," says Carmichael, "we were losing 10 tons of soil per acre per year or an equivalent of $33 per acre in N, P, and K. Terracing reduced our soil loss to 0.7 ton or an equivalent of $2.30 per acre in nutrient loss. Our terraces are saving us $30 per acre per year in fertilizer costs."

Verlan Heberer, St. Clair County: "We had a 40-acre hill divided into four fields, separated by gullies so deep they could not be crossed. The only erosion control was willow sprouts growing in the gullies. Since we built six parallel tile outlet terraces, the soil loss from this steep slope is almost nil."

Robert C. Miller, Piatt County: "From 1940 to 1955 we constructed over 30 miles of contour terraces on our 1,400-acre farm. After years of proper rotations, we have experienced noticeable improvement in the tilth of our topsoil. Now, for more efficient use of larger farming equipment, we are replacing one to two miles of contour terraces each year with the more modern parallel tile outlet terraces. By using 'REAP' cost-share and doing our construction on set-aside or 'idle' acres, we do not interrupt our farming operation."

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension Work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. John B. Claar, Director, Cooperative Extension Service, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

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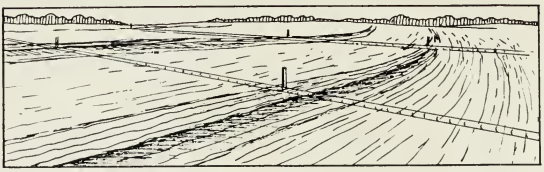
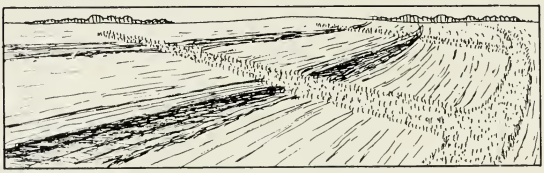
HOW YOUR TERRACE IS DESIGNED

The Soil Conservation Service will design your terraces as parallel as topography and soils permit. The cropping system which you choose will affect the distance between terraces. Terraces cost less than you think. ASCS will cost-share. Plan construction over several years to keep annual costs down. The following outlets and cross-sections are common in Illinois.



Terrace With Tile Outlet

Protects lower lands from flooding.
Drains into underground tile.
Drains hillside wet spots.



Terrace With Grassed Waterway

Drains to grass waterways.
Costs less to build than tile outlet terrace.
Requires waterway maintenance.

Cross-Section of Broadbase Terrace

Allows farming of all the terrace.
Fits modern equipment.
Is best on slopes under 6 percent.

Cross-Section of Grassed Backslope

Has steep sod backslope.
Makes cultivated areas flatter.
Allows wider spacing between terraces.
Is best on slopes over 6 percent.
Fits modern equipment.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND HELP, see your USDA Soil Conservation Service (SCS), University of Illinois Cooperative Extension Service, Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS), or experienced land-improvement contractor.

Prepared by Ralph C. Hay, Extension Agricultural Engineer, Illinois Cooperative Extension Service, and Jerry Schwien, Public Information Specialist, Soil Conservation Service, Champaign, Illinois.

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Engineer, Illinois Cooperative Extension Service, and
Conservation Service, Champaign, Illinois.